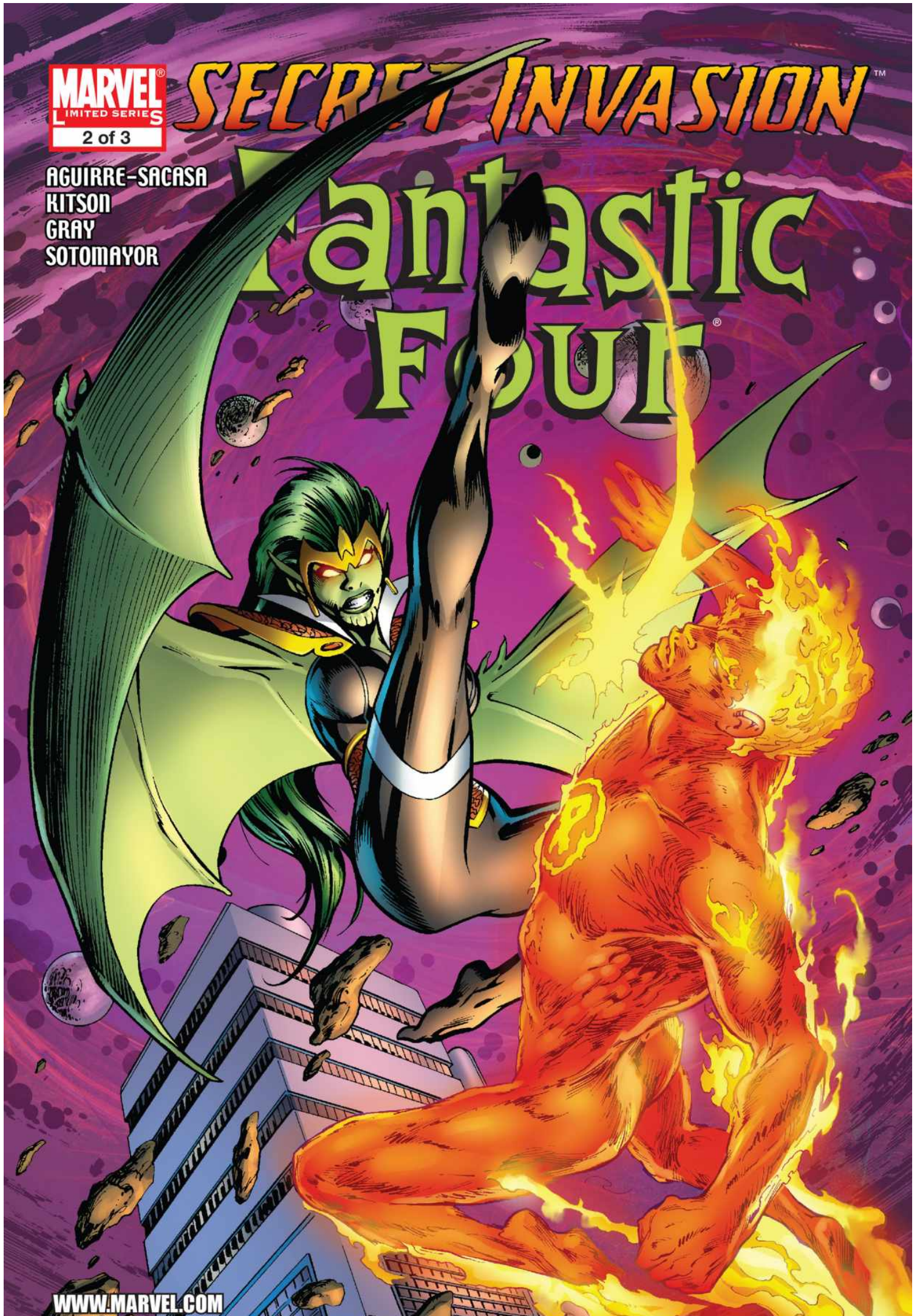


MARVEL
LIMITED SERIES
2 of 3

AGUIRRE-SACASA
KITSON
GRAY
SOTOMAYOR

SECRET INVASION

Fantastic Four



"THE BRIEF (BUT BRIGHT) LOVES OF JONATHAN SPENCER STORM," A SHORT PERSONAL ESSAY BY, WELL...

...ME.

IN THE BEGINNING, THERE WAS HANNAH HENRICKSON, WHO LIVED UP THE STREET FROM MY PARENTS' BOARDING HOUSE.

I CALLED HER "HANNAH BANANA." SHE HAD RED HAIR--AND A TREEHOUSE.

I WAS EIGHT YEARS OLD, HANNAH WAS TEN... (WHAT CAN I SAY, I'VE ALWAYS BEEN INTO OLDER WOMEN...)

BUT THEN CAME HIGH SCHOOL. AND TRACK STARDOM.

I THOUGHT WE'D LAST FOREVER...

AND, HEL-LO, CHEERLEADERS.

GO GLENNVILLE!
GO JOHNNY!
GO GLENNVILLE!
GO JOHNNY!

BLAH-BLAH-BLAH, THEN I BECAME THE HUMAN TORCH, BLAH-BLAH-BLAH, AND MY DATING TOOK



...SURREAL. IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER:

THERE WAS FRANKIE RAYE. NICE GIRL, WE HAD A LOT IN COMMON...



...BUT THEN SHE BECAME NOVA, HERALD OF GALACTUS, AND-- I MEAN--HOW DO YOU COMPETE WITH THAT?

I MEAN, THE GUY'S HUGE.



NAMORITA WAS A LOT FUN, BUT ULTIMATELY...

JOHNNY, WAIT, YOU'RE--

YOU'RE TOTALLY DEHYDRATING ME--

...OIL AND WATER, YOU KNOW?



CRYSTAL...

CRYSTAL WAS GREAT, AND I WAS FINE WITH THE WHOLE INHUMAN THING...



...BUT I NEVER GOT OVER HER CHOOSING QUICKSILVER INSTEAD OF ME--

IT'S NOT YOU, JOHNNY, IT'S ME...

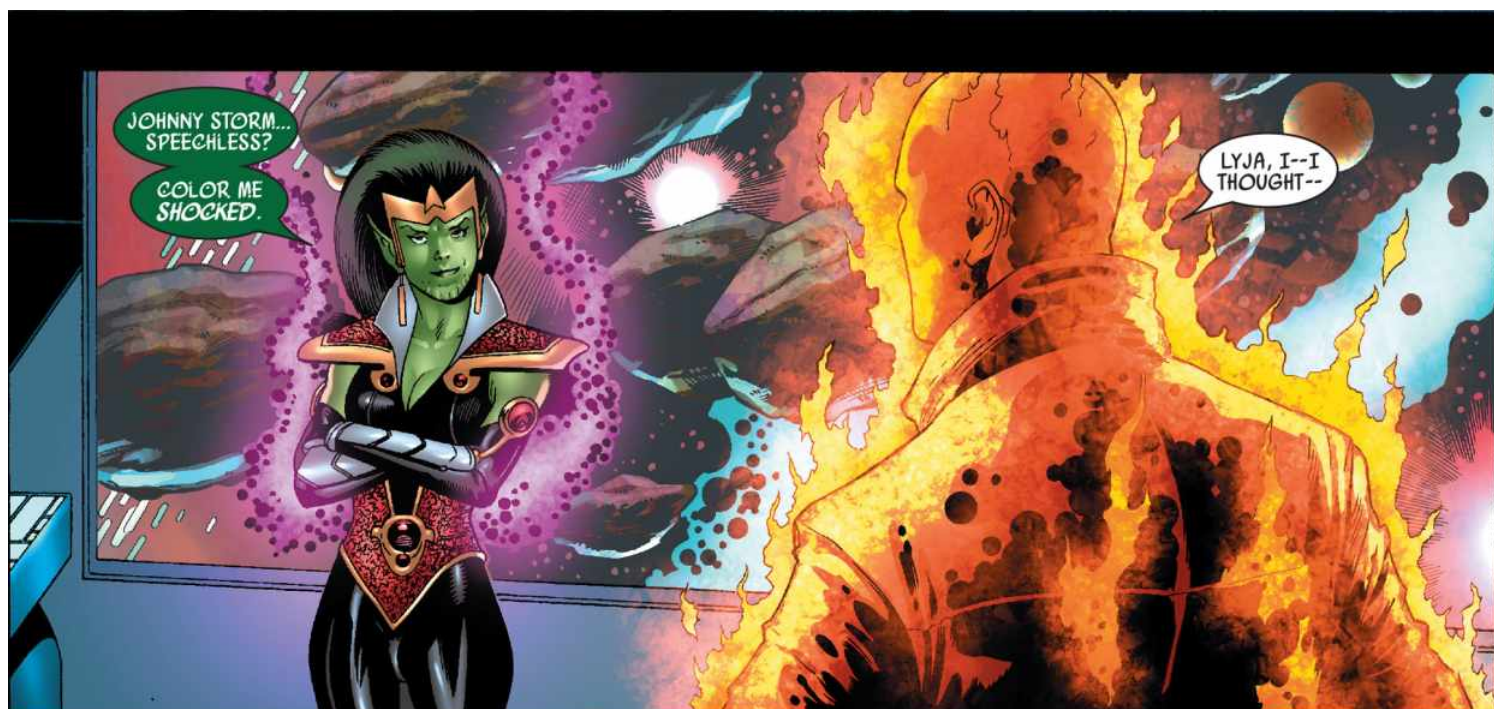
I GUESS I NEVER REALIZED HOW IMPORTANT SPEED WAS TO A RELATIONSHIP UNTIL I MET PIETRO...

--EVEN THOUGH SHE EVENTUALLY RECALLED. (TOO LITTLE, TOO



LAST BUT NOT
LEAST, OF COURSE,
THERE WAS...

LYJA.
OH MY
GOD.



JOHNNY STORM...
SPEECHLESS?

COLOR ME
SHOCKED.

LYJA, I--I
THOUGHT--



--THAT I
WAS DEAD?

NO SUCH
LUCK, I'M
AFRAID--



WHAT?

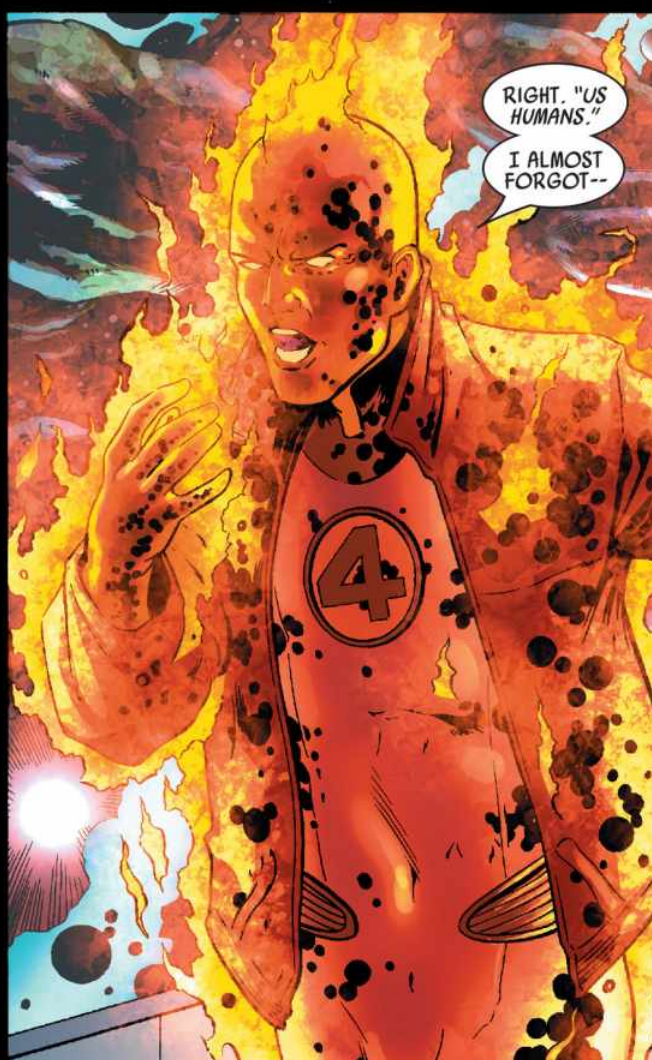
NO--

I--I--



YOU HAVEN'T GIVEN
ME A SECOND'S
THOUGHT,
HAVE YOU?

IN ALL
THIS TIME? ALL
THESE MONTHS?
OUT OF SIGHT,
OUT OF MIND, AS
YOU HUMANS
LIKE TO
SAY?



RIGHT. "US
HUMANS."

I ALMOST
FORGOT--





MEANWHILE.

FRANKLIN AND
VALERIA RICHARDS.

...98, 99,
100--

HIDING IN THE
FANTASTIC FOUR'S
KITCHEN.

A HUNDRED SECONDS HAVE
GONE BY SINCE FRANKLIN HEARD
ANYTHING. A HUNDRED SECONDS
OF DEAD SILENCE.

MEANING, HOPEFULLY,
THAT HIS UNCLE BEN
TOOK CARE OF WHATEVER
THOSE CRAZY BUGS WERE.

IT'S OKAY,
VAL, YOU CAN
COME OUT
NOW...

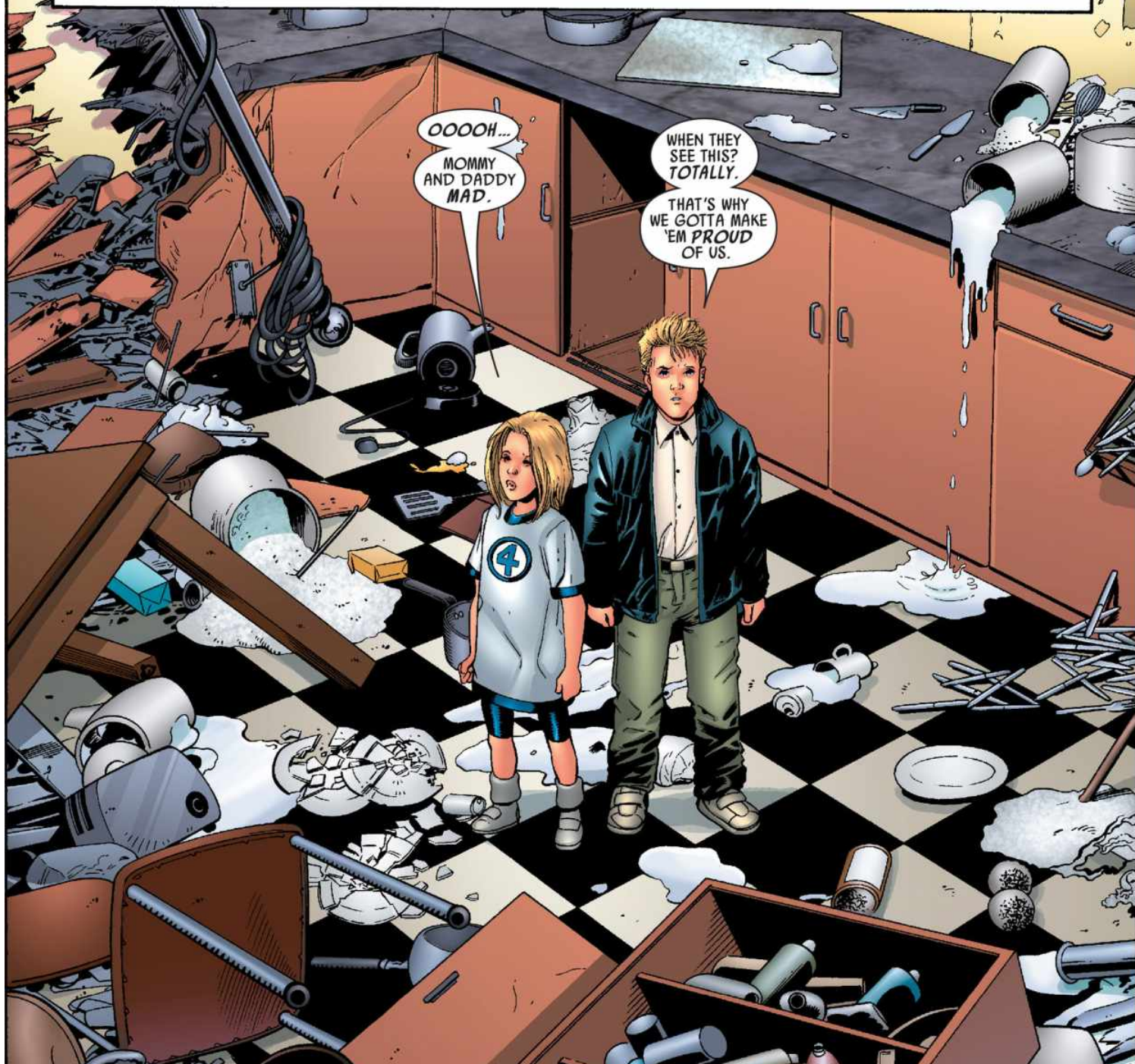
I GOT A
PLAN!

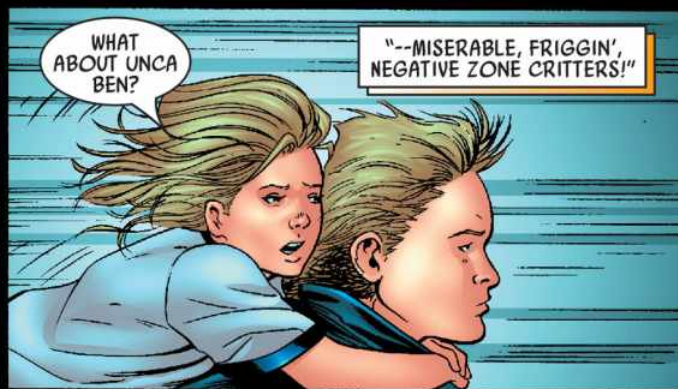
OOOOH...

MOMMY
AND DADDY
MAD.

WHEN THEY
SEE THIS?
TOTALLY.

THAT'S WHY
WE GOTTA MAKE
'EM PROUD
OF US.









Three panels showing a building being destroyed. In the first panel, a dragon is perched on the roof. In the second panel, a fireball is launched from the roof. In the third panel, the building is crumbling under the impact of the fireball.

"...WHERE THE HECK
DID FLAME-BRAIN
GO WHEN ALL THIS
STARTED?"

ZOOOMF--

KA-CRASHHHH--!



A large panel showing a green-skinned dragon with long black hair breathing a stream of fire at a man. The man is wearing a red shirt and is surrounded by flames. A speech bubble from the man is visible on the left.

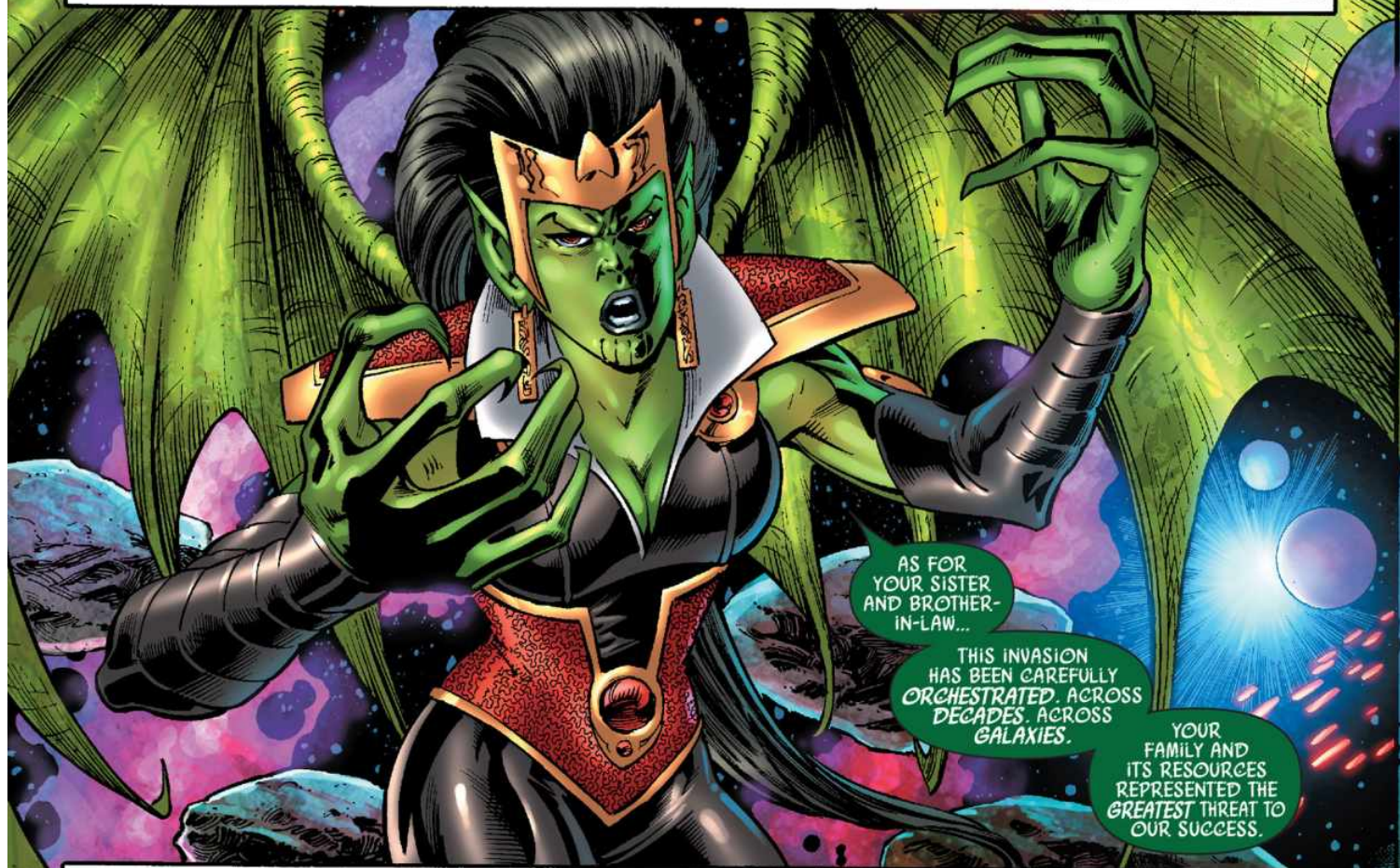
WHY--
AREN'T--
YOU--
BURNING?



A panel showing the man from the previous panel, now engulfed in flames. A dragon is visible in the background, and a speech bubble from the man is at the bottom.

I'VE
ADAPTED,
JOHNNY.

EVOLVED
SINCE OUR
BREAK-UP.



AS FOR
YOUR SISTER
AND BROTHER-
IN-LAW...

THIS INVASION
HAS BEEN CAREFULLY
ORCHESTRATED, ACROSS
DECADES, ACROSS
GALAXIES.

YOUR
FAMILY AND
ITS RESOURCES
REPRESENTED THE
GREATEST THREAT TO
OUR SUCCESS.



...
THE
LONGER YOU
GO WITHOUT
TELLING ME WHAT
YOU DID TO
THEM--



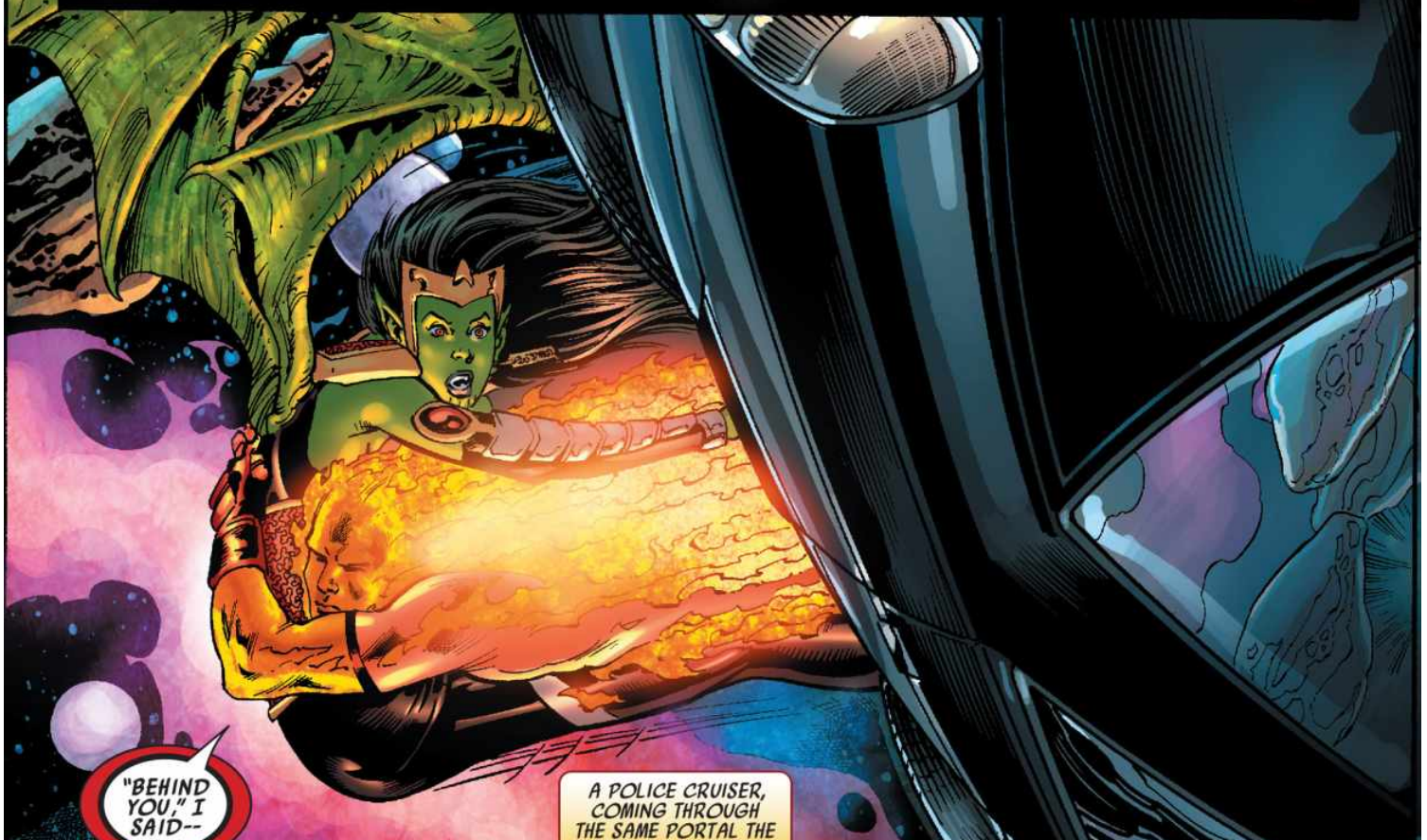
THEY'RE NOT DEAD,
JOHNNY, IF THAT'S WHAT
YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT;
THEY'RE TOO VALUABLE
TO US--

SUE'S
POWERS, REED'S
INTELLECT...

THEY'LL PROVE
INDISPENSABLE
ON THE OTHER
SIDE.



ONCE
WE'RE ALL
ENSLAVED,
YOU MEAN?



CRASSSHHHH!!

YOU...
YOU SAVED
ME...

YEAH, SO
MAYBE--

--MAYBE WE
COULD STOP
TRYING TO, I DON'T
KNOW, KILL EACH
OTHER FOR A FEW
MINUTES?

YOU
KNOW...FOR
OLD TIMES'
SAKE?

JOHNNY...

HERE'S
WHY I'M AN
IDIOT...

I KNOW THAT SHE'S A VIOLENT ALIEN HELLBENT ON WORLD
DOMINATION. I KNOW WE'RE TRAPPED IN A DIMENSION
THAT WARPS THE LAWS OF TIME AND PHYSICS. I KNOW THAT
MY IMMEDIATE PRIORITY SHOULD BE RECONNECTING
WITH MY PEEPS AND GETTING BACK TO NYC...

I KNOW ALL
THESE THINGS
AND MORE...



...BUT I
DO IT
ANYWAY.

FOR
OLD TIMES'
SAKE.

WHICH IS WHY, WHEN A
TENTACLE-THINGIE
SLITHERS OUT OF ONE
OF THE NEGATIVE ZONE'S
NASTIER INHABITANTS--

--AND ENSNARES
US, IT'S KIND OF LIKE:
"YEAH, SHOULD'VE SEEN
THAT COMING..."

REED KEEPS THREATENING
TO DO A ZOOLOGICAL
CATALOGUE OF THE NEGATIVE
ZONE'S BIOLOGICAL SPECIMENS:
WHAT LIVES THERE AND HOW...

ME? I JUST THINK
IT'S LIKE THAT
STEPHEN KING
STORY, *THE MIST*.

I DON'T KNOW
WHAT'S OUT THERE,
AND I DON'T
WANNA KNOW...

I MEAN, ALL THAT NEEDS TO BE SAID ABOUT
THIS THING IS THAT IT LOOKS LIKE A JELLYFISH,
AND THAT WE *DON'T* WANT TO BE PULLED
INTO ITS BODY. I MEAN, 10 TO 1 WE'D BE
TRAPPED, SLOWLY DISSOLVING IN THERE,
FLOATING IN ITS PLASMA/ACID STOMACH...

LYJA, I'M
GONNA LET
YOU GO--

NO--!
JOHNNY--!!

I HAVE
TO--

JOHNNY!!!

LISTEN
TO ME: STAY
CALM--

GRAB THE
TENTACLE WITH
YOUR HANDS--

THIS *COULD*
GO EITHER WAY--

LYJA *COULD*
COMPLETELY



--BUT...I'M
BETTING ON
GREEN.

WHEN ALL IS SAID
AND DONE, LYJA'S A
SKRULL WARRIOR--



SO SHE
PULLS IT
TOGETHER--

TAKES THE
BULL BY THE
HORNS--



I DO THE SAME--
(IMMEDIATELY, MY HANDS
START TO **BURN**; THIS
THING MUST BE **TOXIC**
TO THE TOUCH--)

NOW
POUR IT
ON--

EVERYTHING
YOU'VE GOT--



I DO THE
SAME--

AS HOT AS
I CAN GO--



AND
PLEASE, GOD,
LET IT BE
ENOUGH...

MEANWHILE.
THE BAXTER
BUILDING.

AS BEN GRIMM WORKS
HIS WAY BACK TO
FRANKLIN AND VALERIA.



AWWWW...



...SQUID.

=SIGH=

WHERE'S AN
ALIEN SPERM-
WHALE WHEN YOU
NEED ONE?

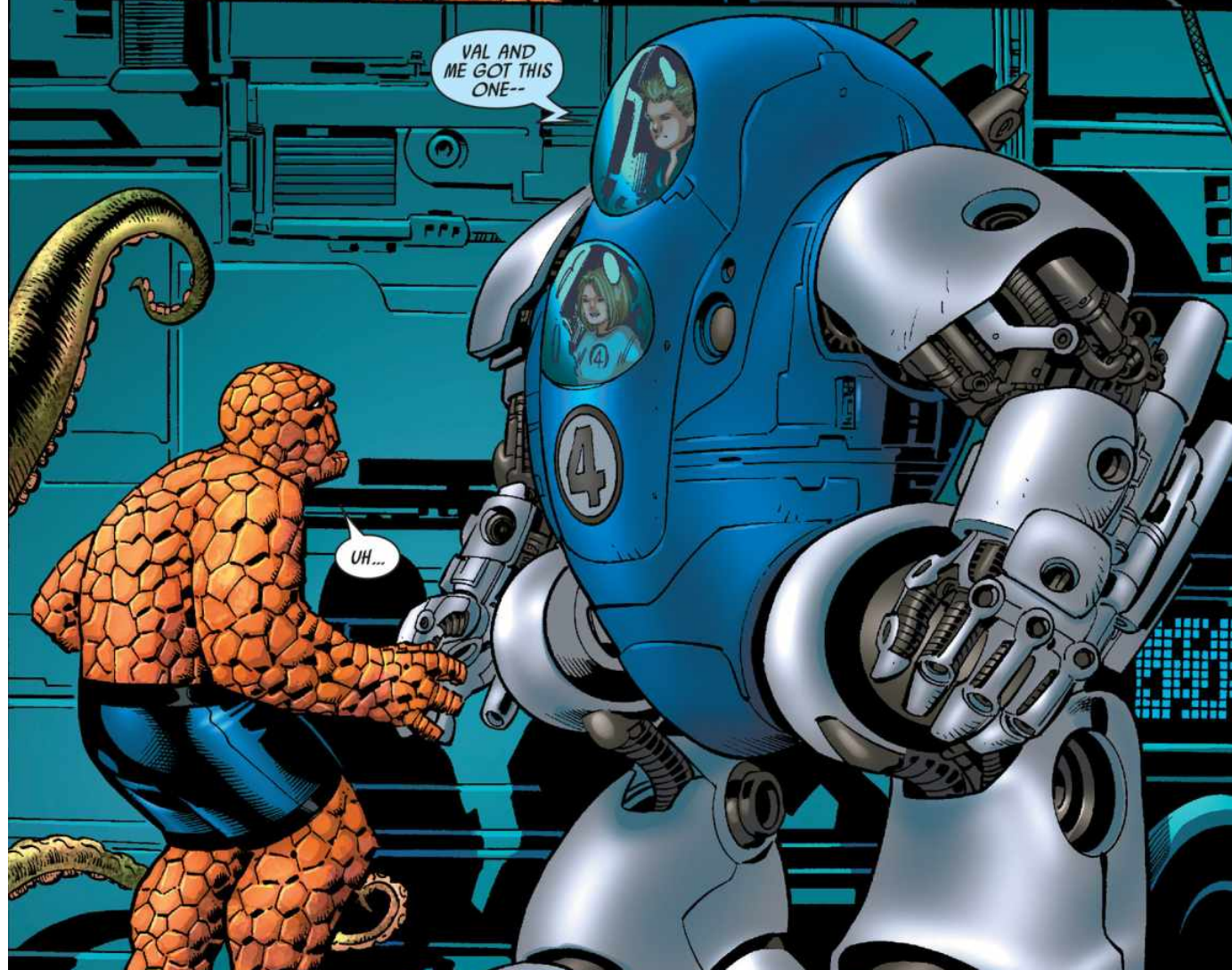


IT'S
OKAY, UNCLE
BEN--



VAL AND
ME GOT THIS
ONE--

UH...



WHAT DO YA THINK,
VAL? PULSE
CANNONS AT FIFTY
PERCENT?

YEAH!

YEAH, TOTALLY.
TARGETING...

WHOA--

FWOOM--

REEEEEEEEH--!!

YOU
OKAY, UNCLE
BEN?

UHHH,
YEAH.

YEAH, I'M
GOOD.

'CEPT FER
THE FACT THAT YER
WEARING A BATTLE-SUIT...
OTHER THAN THAT,
I'M SWELL.

IT'S DAD'S.
HE MADE IT, BUT
THEN MOM YELLED AT HIM
FOR MAKING IT EVEN
THOUGH DAD SAYS IT'S
DEFENSIVE, SO HE DIDN'T
GIVE IT TO US, EXCEPT
I KNEW WHERE IT WAS
AND--AND--

--ISN'T
IT SO COOL!
LIKE IRON
MAN!

YAY,
IRON
MAN!!

YEAH, AND
BROTHER, DO
I WISH MR. TIN
CAN WUZ
HERE...

LOOKIT
YER DAD'S
LAB...

YEAH, LIKE
THE KITCHEN,
BUT WAY
WORSE.

DADDY'S LAB
SMASHED!!

THE SIXTY-
FOUR MILLION
DOLLAR QUESTION
BEING...

WHO'S
GONNA
UN-SMASH
IT?

UNCLE
JOHNNY--

DOUBTFUL,
VAL. IF IT DOESN'T
HAVE FOUR WHEELS OR
BLONDE HAIR, YER
UNC'S A HOPELESS
CASE...

NO,
UNCLE BEN,
SHE MEANS
LOOK--



--IT'S UNCLE
JOHNNY!

SUE WASN'T
SUE, SHE WAS
REALLY LYJA--

SHE'S
PART OF A
HUGE SKRULL
INVASION--

THIS ALIEN
JELLYFISH TRIED
TO EAT HER, BUT
WE BROKE
FREE--

THE IRONY
IS: I'VE HAD
WEIRDER
DAYS...



LYJA?
JEEZ-LOUISE,
IT'S ALWAYS
SOMETHING WITH
YOU, HUH?

SHE
PASSED OUT
FROM THE STRAIN,
BUT THAT'S A GOOD
THING.

WE NEED
TO GET BACK
TO FIND REED
AND SUE, LIKE,
YESTERDAY--



I WAS JUST
SAYING...

UNLESS
YER IQ'S
SUDDENLY WAY
HIGHER...

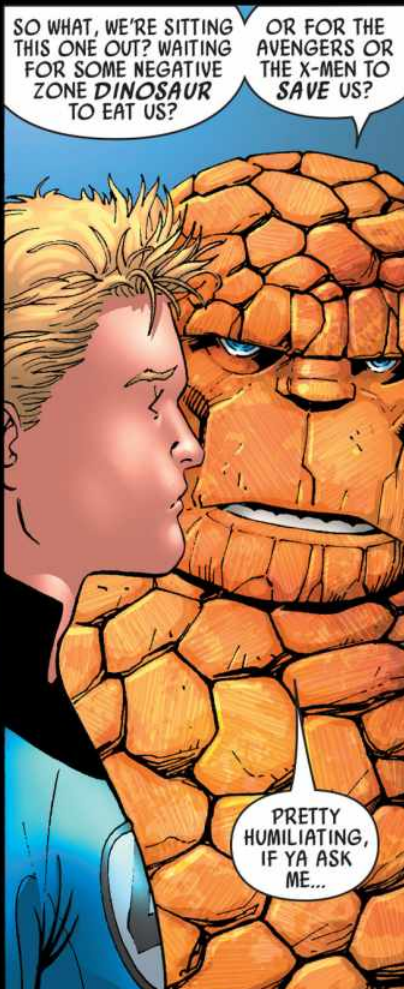
THAT'S
GONNA BE
A PROBLEM.
MATCH-HEAD...



YEAH, NO
JOKE.

EVEN IF SHE
WERE AWAKE, I
DON'T THINK LYJA WOULD
BE WILLING--OR ABLE--
TO FIX...WHATEVER NEEDS
TO BE FIXED TO
SEND US BACK.

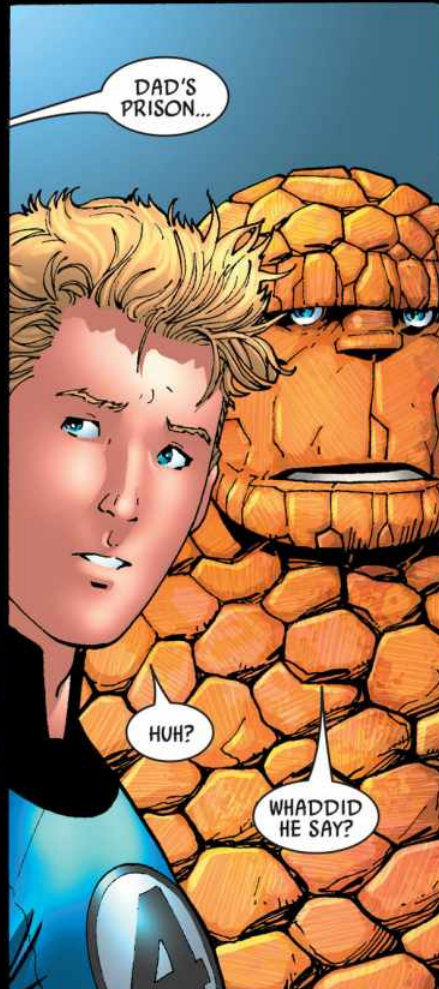
TRUTHFULLY?
I DON'T EVEN
KNOW WHAT WE'D
START FIXING
FIRST, BEN.



SO WHAT, WE'RE SITTING
THIS ONE OUT? WAITING
FOR SOME NEGATIVE
ZONE DINOSAUR
TO EAT US?

OR FOR THE
AVENGERS OR
THE X-MEN TO
SAVE US?

PRETTY
HUMILIATING,
IF YA ASK
ME...



DAD'S
PRISON...

HUH?

WHADDID
HE SAY?



DAD'S PRISON IS IN THE NEGATIVE ZONE, RIGHT?

AND HAS LOTS OF BAD GUYS IN IT?



UH...

YEAH, ACTUALLY.

OH, GOD, WE'RE ABOUT TO BE SHOWN UP BY A SEVEN-YEAR-OLD...



SO MAYBE ONE OF THE BAD GUYS CAN HELP US?

MAYBE ONE OF THE BAD GUYS KNOWS HOW TO FIX THINGS?

GRANTED, THE SEVEN-YEAR-OLD IN QUESTION IS REED RICHARDS'S SON...



WE...WE WOULD'VE THOUGHT OF THAT EVENTUALLY--RIGHT, BEN?

I MEAN, WE HAVE BEEN DOING THIS A WHILE, HAVEN'T WE?

FRANKIE...

YER A GENIUS.



AWESOME, SO CAN VAL AND I GO TO THE PRISON WITH YOU GUYS?

TO RESCUE A BAD GUY?

YAY, PRISON!

YOU GOTTA ADMIT...

...THE KIDS' GOT SPUNK.

